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Protracted conflicts in the GUAM area and their implications for international peace, security and development

The situation in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan

Letter dated 20 February 2009 from the Permanent Representative of Armenia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I would like to present to your attention the texts of the statements by the Co-Chairs of the Minsk Group of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe made on 29 January 2009 and 19 February 2009, respectively, concerning the ongoing negotiations on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict (see annexes).

I would highly appreciate if you could circulate the texts of the statements as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 13 and 18.

(*Signed*) Armen **Martirosyan**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex I to the letter dated 20 February 2009 from the Permanent Representative of Armenia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Statement by the Co-Chairs of the Minsk Group of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

Zurich, 29 January 2009. The Co-Chairmen of the OSCE Minsk Group released the following statement today:

The Co-Chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group (Ambassador Bernard Fassier, France; Ambassador Yuri Merzlyakov, Russian Federation; Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Matthew Bryza, United States) travelled to Baku on 19 January 2009, where they met with President Ilham Aliyev and Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov, and to Yerevan on 20 January 2009, where they met with President Serzh Sarkisyan and Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian.

The Co-Chairs met again jointly with Foreign Ministers Mammadyarov and Nalbandian in Zurich on 27 January 2009, and organized a joint meeting with Presidents Aliyev and Sarkisyan in Zurich on 28 January 2009, on the margins of the World Economic Forum.

The Co-Chairs explored with the two Presidents their thoughts on how to finalize the Basic Principles on the peaceful settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, proceeding from the proposal presented to the sides at the OSCE Ministerial Conference in Madrid in November 2007.

The Co-Chairs agreed to work with the Foreign Ministers on elaborating proposals for the consideration of the two Presidents on the most important remaining differences between the sides existing within the framework of the Basic Principles. The Co-Chairs hope the parties will be able to bridge these remaining differences in the nearest future to secure a peace agreement that is far better for all parties than the status quo. Their goal is a just and balanced agreement based on the Helsinki Final Act principles of territorial integrity, self-determination, and non-use of force.

Annex II to the letter dated 20 February 2009 from the Permanent Representative of Armenia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Statement of the Co-Chairs of the Minsk Group of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

Paris/Moscow/Washington, 19 February 2009. The Co-Chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group, Ambassadors Bernard Fassier of France, Yury Merzlyakov of Russia, and Matthew Bryza of the United States, released the following statement today:

The Co-Chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group stress that, despite two reports circulated at the request of the Permanent Representative of Azerbaijan to the United Nations on 24 and 29 December 2008, there is no military solution to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. The Co-Chairs further underscore the non-use of force as a core element of any just and lasting settlement of the conflict.

Presidents Ilham Aliyev and Serge Sargsyan described their most recent meeting, in Zurich on 28 January 2009, as useful and constructive, despite two Azerbaijani reports circulated in the United Nations General Assembly one month earlier. At the conclusion of their Zurich meeting, the Presidents reiterated their commitment to the Minsk Group peace process, and asked the Co-Chairs to intensify their efforts to help the parties bridge their remaining differences with regard to the Basic Principles.

In subsequent public statements, both Presidents underscored their enduring commitment to the Minsk Group's mediation effort. Therefore, the Minsk Group's Co-Chairs will visit the region before the end of February to help the parties to accelerate their efforts to finalize the Basic Principles.

The Minsk Group Co-Chairs will not allow the peace process to be subverted by legalistic or historical discussions, though they will remain sensitive to historical concerns expressed by the parties to the conflict, all of which must be addressed in due course. The Co-Chairs further believe the above-mentioned reports should have no bearing on negotiations within the Minsk Group in pursuit of a peaceful and political settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, to which both Presidents committed themselves in their Moscow Declaration of 2 November 2008.